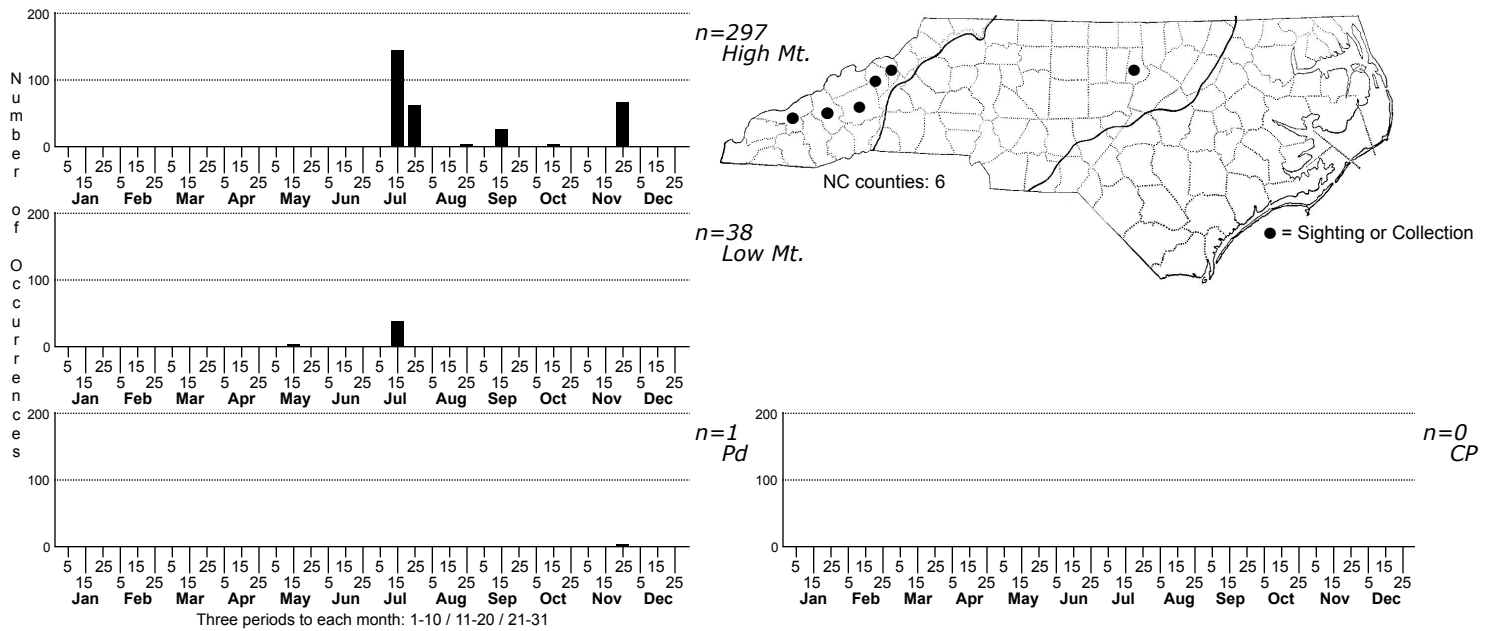


## *Echiniscus virginicus*



FAMILY: Echiniscidae

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: Considered a pseudocryptic species with *E. lineatus* that is pantropical. Only morphological distinction is different cuticle pore structure observable with SEM. TN specimens (and from other eastern US states) positively identified as *E. virginicus* by DNA analysis (Gasiorek et al. 2019).

SPECIES COMMENTS: Terrestrial. Eastern US, Caribbean, Central Am. and Venezuela.

ID COMMENTS: Length up to 183 microns, sculpture composed of a dense granulation. Presence or absence of eye spots and coloration of the tardigrade not indicated by the author. The internal and external buccal cirri are slender filaments, the cephalic papilla is well developed. The lateral appendices are spines C, D, E (respectively 18-22 microns (12-21.6 microns, 21.6-25 microns long) with enlarged bases; dorsally, exists short, robust spines cd (7 microns) and Dd (10,8-14.4 microns). Median plate 3 present, terminal plate not faceted, with the usual two notches. Dentate collar with 9 teeth on the fourth pair of legs; internal claws of all the legs with strong spur curved in proximal direction, positioned at considerable distance from the base of the claw. The description of the author does not cite the presence of papilla on the 4th pair of legs and of the spine on the 1st pair, which on the other hand are not figured even on the drawing and which should then be considered absent.

The sculpture is in fact clearly different from that of *E. quadrispinosus*, and consists of rounded or polygonal pores, small, very dense and regularly distributed. The lateral appendices are filaments A and robust spines C, D, and E. Dorsally there are very short spines C, at times hardly a hint or even absent, and spines D which may even become considerably long and robust. The spine on the first pair of legs, and the papilla on the fourth (not mentioned in the first description) are in reality absent.

-Ramazzotti & Maucci 1982

DISTRIBUTION: Please refer to the dot map.

HABITAT: Tree lichen and tree moss, less commonly in other terrestrial habitats.

OBSERVATION METHODS: DIC and PC microscopy.